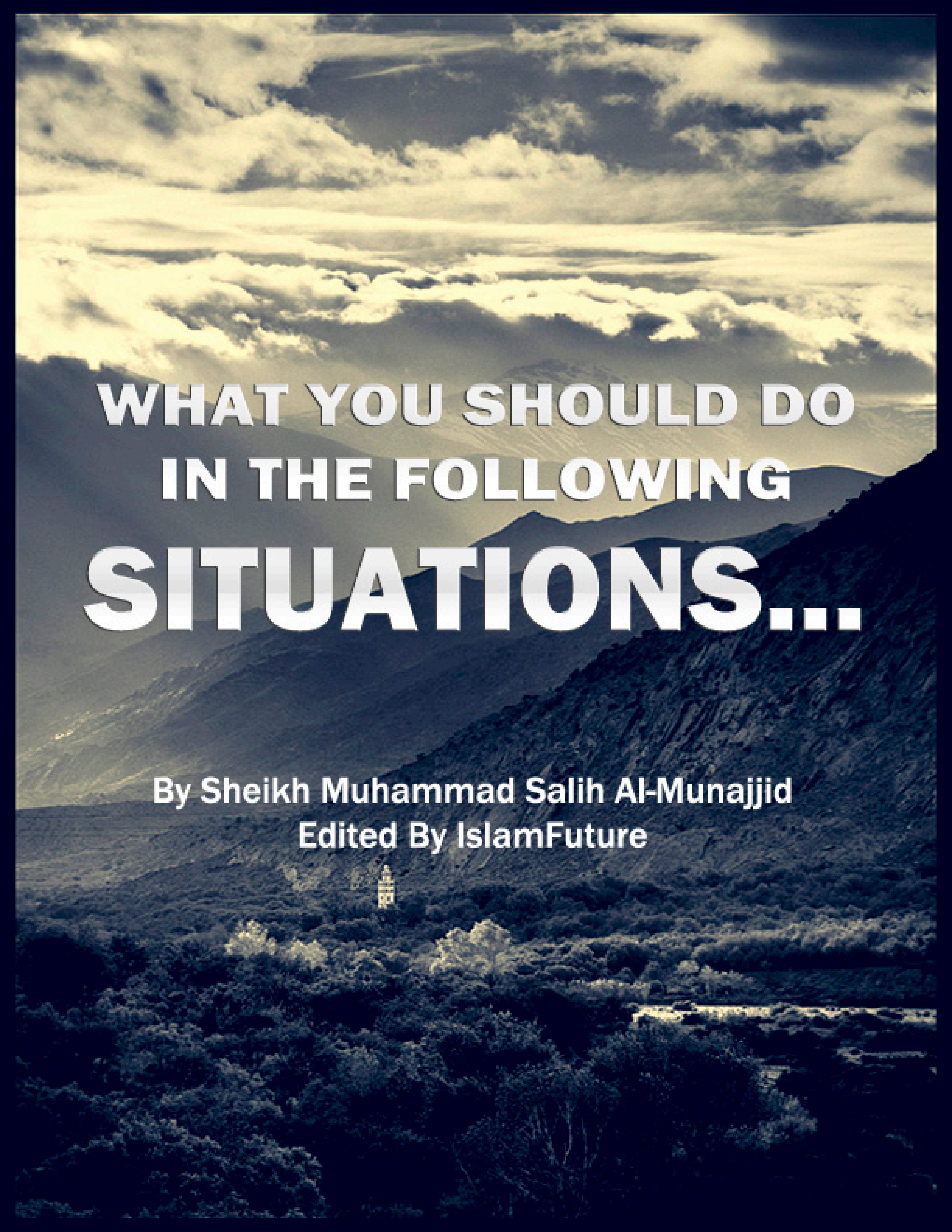

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO
IN THE FOLLOWING
SITUATIONS...
By Sheikh Muhammad Salih Al-Munajjid
Edited By IslamFuture

بِسۡمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحۡمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

Bismi Allahi Alrrahmani Alrraheemi

In the name of Allah, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO
IN THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS

English Translation
Book by Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid

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INTRODUCTION

Praise be to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds, and peace and blessings be upon the most noble of the Prophets and Messengers, our Prophet Muhammad, and upon all his family and companions.

The Muslim may be faced with a number of emergency situations in his life, where he needs an immediate answer as to how he should act in that particular situation. In most cases, however, it is not possible to look for or ask about the appropriate Islamic rulings at that time.

This proves the importance of learning about Islam and knowing the rules of sharee'ah, so that when a Muslim needs this information, he will have it at hand and will thus be able to save himself or his Muslim brother from doing something haraam or making a mistake. In so many cases, ignorance can lead to corruption of worship or – at the very least – acute embarrassment. It is unfortunate that an imaam may mistakenly stand up for a fifth rak'ah, and there may be nobody in the congregation or the mosque who knows what the rulings of sharee'ah say should be done in such a situation. Or a traveller who is intending to perform 'umrah may come to the airport at the last minute, and suddenly discover that he has forgotten his ihraam garments, but he has no time to do anything about it, and there is nobody among the Muslim in the airport who can tell him what he should do in this emergency. Or a man may come to the mosque on an occasion when the prayers have been joined together because of rain: the congregation is already praying 'ishaa' but he has not yet prayed maghrib, so he is confused as to what he should do. In such a situation the people may embark upon a debate based only on ignorance, and so confusion will reign in the mosques. In many individual and personal matters, ignorance may lead to embarrassment and even sin, especially when a person is in the position of having to make a decision and he does not have sufficient knowledge on which to base that decision.

People in this world have prepared information telling people how to behave in emergency situations: what to do if fire breaks out, if someone is drowning, if a scorpion bites, if there is a car accident, if someone is bleeding or has broken a bone… All of these first aid procedures are well known; they teach them to people and hold special courses. How much more important is it, then, that those who are concerned with the Hereafter should learn and teach the rules of this religion!

At this point, we should note the importance of differentiating between hypothetical matters which rarely, if ever, happen, and matters which we know from experience do happen to people and are asked about.

With regard to the first type (hypothetical situations), asking about them is a fruitless waste of time, which is not allowed in Islam. The Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) warned us against this when he said: "Accept what I have left you with, for the people who came before you were only destroyed because of their excessive questioning and their disputing with their Prophets…" (Reported by al-Bukhaari and Muslim; this version was reported by Muslim, no. 1337, vol. 2, p. 975)

Commenting on this hadeeth, Ibn Rajab (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "These ahaadeeth indicate that it is forbidden to ask questions unnecessarily… or to ask questions out of stubbornness or an intention to mock." (Jaami' al-'Uloom wa'l-Hukm by Ibn Rajab, 1/240, edited by al-Arna'oot)

This is how we interpret the words of a group of the salaf, such as the report that when Zayd ibn Thaabit, may Allah be pleased with him, was asked about something, he would say, "Has it really happened?" If they said "No," he would tell them, "Leave it until it really happens." (Reported by Ibn Rajab, op. cit., 1/245; see also similar reports in Sunan al-Daarimi, 1/49, and Jaami Bayaan al-'Ilm by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, 2/174).

With regard to the second type, matters that really happen, then it is good to ask about them. The Companions of the Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) sometimes asked him about things before they happened, but it was so that they could act accordingly when these things did happen. For example, they asked him: “We are going to meet with the enemy tomorrow, and we do not have knives, so should we use dried sugar canes as weapons?” They asked him about the rulers who he had told them would come after him, and whether they should obey them or fight them. Hudhayfah asked him about al-fitan (times of tribulation) and what he should do at such times. (Jaami’ al-‘Uloom al-Hukm, 1/243). This indicates that it is permissible to ask about things which are expected to happen.

There follows a discussion about some issues that people are likely to face in real life. These are practical matters which have happened and could happen to some people. In each case, the answer is accompanied by a reference to the sources in the work of trustworthy scholars. There may be differing opinions in some cases, but the answer has been limited to one viewpoint, the one based on the soundest evidence, for the sake of brevity and ease of understanding. I ask Allah to benefit me and my brothers in Islam in this world and on the Day of Judgement. May He reward with good all those who share in this endeavour, for He is the Most Kind and Generous. Allah knows best.

May Allah bless our Prophet Muhammad and all his family and companions.

TAHAARAH (PURITY AND CLEANLINESS)

Paint or dirt on hands when making wudoo'

If a person finds something like paint or dirt on his hands etc, whilst making wudoo', and tries to remove it, does this break the continuity of his wudoo' and mean that he has to start again?

Answer: According to the most sound opinion, this does not break the continuity of his wudoo', even if the parts of his body that have already been washed become dry, because he was delayed by something that is connected to tahaarah. Similarly his wudoo' is not affected if he moves from one tap to another in order to get water, etc.

But if he is interrupted by something that is not connected to his wudoo', such as removing some impurity from his clothes, or eating or drinking, and so on, and the parts of his body that he has already washed during wudoo' become dry, then he has to repeat his wudoo'. (Fataawa Ibn 'Uthaymeen, 4/145-146).

Dressings on wounds

If a person has an injury in any part of his body that should be washed during wudoo', and cannot put a band-aid or dressing on it, then he should do wudoo', and do tayammum for the wounded part (al-Mughni ma'a al-Sharh al-Kabeer, 1/282). He does not have to wash the wounded part if this will be harmful.

Traces of janaabah (impurity) on clothes

If a person sees some traces of janaabah (impurity such as semen, etc.) on his clothes, and he has already prayed some prayers without realizing that this was there, he should do ghusl and repeat the prayers done since the most recent period of sleep wearing these clothes. If, however, he knows that this janaabah is from a previous

period of sleep, he should repeat all the prayers since the end of the sleep in which he thinks the janaabah occurred. (al-Mughni ma'a al-Sharh al-Kabeer, 1/199).

The evidence that he should perform ghusl for salaah in cases of janaabah is to be found in many places, such as the aayah "O you who believe! Approach not the prayer when you are in a drunken state until you know (the meaning) of what you utter, nor when you are in a state of janaabah (i.e., in a state of sexual impurity and have not yet taken a bath), except when travelling on the road (without enough water, etc.), till you wash your whole body…" [al-Nisaa' 4:43] and the hadeeth of 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) in which he said: "I was a man who experienced a lot of urethral discharge, so I kept washing myself (doing ghusl) until the skin on my back started to crack. I mentioned that to the Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), or it was mentioned to him, so he said: "Don't do that. If you see discharge, wash your private parts and do wudoo' for prayer as usual. If water (i.e., semen) gushes out, then do ghusl." (Reported by Abu Dawood, no. 206; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Irwaa' al-Ghaleel, no. 125). This indicates that when semen is emitted, ghusl is a must, but when there is discharge, it is enough just to wash the private part and do wudoo'.

Janaabah whilst travelling

A traveller may find himself on a long plane journey during which he becomes junub (impure). He has no way of performing ghusl, and there is nothing on the plane that he could use for tayammum. If he waits until he reaches his destination, the time for prayer will be over, and it may be a prayer that he cannot join with another, such as fajr, when he set out before fajr and will not arrive until after sunrise, or the time for joining two prayers such as zuhr and 'asr may also be over, because he set out before zuhr and will not arrive until after maghrib. What should he do in such a situation?

If we accept that he has no means of performing ghusl on board the plane, then he is in the situation known by the scholars as "the one who does not have access to the two purifying materials (i.e., water or earth)." There are varying opinions on this situation. Imaam Ahmad and the majority of muhaddithoon say that he should pray as he is, because this is all that he can do, and "Allaah burdens not a person beyond his scope." [al-Baqarah 2:286 – interpretation of the meaning].

The specific evidence in this case is the report narrated by Muslim in his Saheeh, where it states that the Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sent some people to look for a necklace that 'Aa'ishah had lost. The time for prayer came, and they prayed without wudoo' (because they could not find water). When they came to the Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), they told him about it and then the aayah of tayammum was revealed. (Saheeh Muslim, 367). The Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not blame or criticize them, neither did he tell them to repeat the prayer. This indicates that prayer is obligatory, and even though tahaarah is a condition for prayer, prayer should not be delayed when tahaarah cannot be accomplished. (al-Mughni ma'a al-Sharh al-Kabeer, 1/251).

A similar ruling applies to the sick who cannot move their limbs at all, and people who are imprisoned and chained up or suspended.

What is meant is that the prayer should be performed in the best way possible under the circumstances, and it should not be delayed beyond its set time. According to the soundest opinion, it does not have to be repeated, for Allaah does not lay upon us in religion any hardship.

Bleeding after miscarriage – nifaas or not?

If a woman miscarries and bleeds, should she pray or not? The answer to this question depends on the kind of blood: is it nifaas or not? The scholars have mentioned the regulations concerning this: "If she sees blood after passing something that has any human features, then it is nifaas, but if she sees it after passing something that resembles a blood clot (nutfah or 'alaq), then it is not nifaas." (al-Mughni ma'a al-Sharh al-Kabeer, 1/361).

In the latter case, this is istihaadah (irregular bleeding), so she should do wudoo' for each prayer after the time for that prayer has started, and then pray. If what she passed is a fully formed foetus or has some formed limbs, such as a hand or a foot or a leg, then this is nifaas. If she says that they took it away in the hospital and threw it away, and she did not see it, then the scholars say that the shortest time in which human features could be formed is eighty-one days from the time of conception. (Majmoo'at Fataawa al-Shaykh ibn 'Uthaymeen, 4/292).

This is based on the hadeeth narrated by 'Abd-Allaah ibn Mas'ood according to which the Messenger of Allaah SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), who is the one who speaks the truth, said: "The creation of each one of you is gathered for forty days in his mother's stomach (womb), then he is 'alaqah (something that clings) for a similar length of time, then he is mudghah (something like a lump of chewed flesh) for a similar length of time. Then Allaah sends an angel who is commanded to do four things: he is told to write down his deeds, his provision and whether he is to be unfortunate (doomed to Hell) or blessed (destined for Paradise)…" (This version narrated by al-Bukhaari, Fath, 6/303).

Any woman facing this problem should try to seek the advice of doctors to find out exactly what her situation is.

With regard to the blood which may be discharged just prior to a normal birth: if it is accompanied by labour pains or contractions, then it is nifaas, otherwise it is not.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: "What she sees when the labour pains begin is nifaas. What is meant here is contractions followed by delivery; if this is not the case then it is not nifaas." (Majmoo' Fataawa Ibn 'Uthaymeen, 4/327).

SALAAH (PRAYER)

Waswaas (insinuating thoughts from Shaytaan)

If, when praying, a person experiences waswaas (insinuating thoughts) from Shaytaan, which cause him to falter in his recitation of Qur'aan, make him think bad thoughts and make him doubt the number of rak'ahs he has completed, what should he do?

This happened to one of the Sahaabah, namely 'Uthmaan ibn Abi al-'Aas (may Allaah be pleased with him). He came to the Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and complained about it: "The Shaytaan comes between me and my salaah, and causes me to falter in my recitation." The Messenger of Allaah SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "That is a shaytaan (devil) called Khanzab. If you sense his presence, seek refuge with Allaah and spit (dry spitting) to your left three times." 'Uthmaan (later) said: "I did that, and Allaah rid me of him." (Saheeh Muslim, no. 2203).

This hadeeth indicates two ways in which one may ward off the shaytaan who tries to disrupt one's prayers. The first is to seek refuge with Allaah from the evil of Shaytaan, even by pronouncing these words whilst praying – there is nothing wrong with doing so in this case. The second is to spit (dry spitting) to the left three times. This means blowing air in a manner similar to spitting but ejecting more a very small amount of saliva, so long as this will not affect the person next to you or making the masjid dirty.

What if something happens during prayer?

If something happens to a person whilst praying, men should say “Subhaan Allaah,” and women should clap. The evidence for this is the hadeeth narrated from Sahl ibn Sa’d, according to which the Messenger of Allaah SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “If something happens to you during salaah, men should say ‘Subhaan Allaah’ and women should clap.” (Reported by Abu Dawood). According to the version narrated by al-Bukhaari and Muslim: “Tasbeeh (saying ‘Subhaan Allaah’) is for men, and clapping is for women.” (Sunan Abi Dawood, 941; Saheeh al-Bukhaari (al-Bugha edition), 1145; Saheeh Muslim, 106).

Call of nature when the iqaamah is given

If the prayer is about to start (the iqaamah is given) and a person feels the call of nature, he should go to the bathroom and attend to his need, even if this means he will miss the congregational prayer. The evidence for this was narrated by ‘Abd-Allaah ibn Arqam: “The Messenger of Allaah SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘If any one of you needs to answer the call of nature and the prayer is about to begin, let him tend to his need first.’” (Reported by Abu Dawood, no. 88; see also Saheeh al-Jaami’, 373).

Doubts about passing wind

If a person who is praying is in doubt as to whether he has passed wind or not, or he feels some movement in his abdomen, should he stop praying or should he continue?

If he is certain that he has passed wind, he should stop praying, but if he is uncertain or doubtful, he should not stop – until he becomes sure of it, either by hearing a sound or by smelling an odour.

If he finds that he has passed wind, he should stop praying, otherwise he should not pay any attention to it.

The evidence for this is the hadeeth reported by Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him): "The Messenger of Allaah SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'If any one of you is praying and feels some movement in his back passage, and is in doubt as to whether he has passed wind or not, he should not stop praying until he hears a sound or detects an odour.'" (Reported by Abu Dawood, 177; see also Saheeh al-Jaami', 750).

This is one of the important Islamic prescriptions for curing waswaas (the insinuating whispers of Shaytaan).

If adhaan for fajr is called whilst one is praying witr

If a person is praying witr and the muezzin calls the adhaan (call to prayer) for fajr whilst he is still praying, should he continue with his witr?

Yes, if the adhaan comes whilst he is praying witr, he should complete the prayer, and there is nothing wrong with doing so. (Ibn 'Uthaymeen, Fataawa Islaamiyyah, 1/346). This matter has to do with the timing of witr prayer and whether it ends at the start of fajr or the end of fajr. The majority (of scholars) say that it ends at the start of fajr prayer. (Is'aaf Ahl al-'Asr bima warada fi Ahkaam Salaat al-Witr by Fayhaan al-Mutayri, p. 33)

Missed ‘asr and reaches masjid when maghrib prayer has started

If a person has missed ‘asr prayer and arrives at the masjid to find that maghrib prayer has started, what should he do?

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: He should pray maghrib with the imaam, then pray ‘asr, as is agreed upon by all leading scholars. As to whether he should repeat maghrib, there are two opinions. The first is that he should repeat it; this is the view of Ibn ‘Umar, Maalik and Abu Haneefah, and the most well known view of Ahmad. The second opinion is that he does not have to repeat it; this is the view of Ibn ‘Abbaas and al-Shaafi’i, and the second view of Ahmad. The second view is more correct, because Allaah did not make it obligatory for a person to pray a salaah twice if he has feared Allaah as much as he can. And Allaah knows best. (Majmoo’ Fataawa Ibn Taymiyah, 22/106).

Traveller joining congregation without knowing if imaam is also a traveller

If a traveller comes upon a congregation praying, and he does not know if the imaam is also a traveller (so that he can join the prayer with the intention of shortening it), or he is a resident (so that he can pray the complete prayer behind him), what should he do?

According to the strongest opinion, he should act on the basis of what he sees of signs of travel on the imaam, such as clothing or travel gear. If it appears to him that the imaam is a resident, then he should pray the complete prayer behind him.

The evidence for this is the report narrated by Ahmad from Ibn ‘Abbaas, who was asked: “What is the reason why a traveller prays two rak’ahs if he is alone and four rak’ahs if he prays behind a resident?” He said: “That is the sunnah.” According to another report he said: “That is the sunnah of Abu’l-Qaasim.” (Al-Haafiz did not

comment on this hadeeth in al-Takhlees, 2/50, but Ahmad Shaakir classed its isnaad as saheeh in his commentary on al-Musnad, 3/260).

If he assumes that the imaam is a traveller, and prays two rak'ahs with the intention of praying a shortened prayer, then after salaam (completion of the prayer) he discovers that the imaam is in fact a resident and that these two rak'ahs were the third and fourth prayed by the imaam, in this case he should stand up, pray two more rak'ahs to complete the prayer, and do sujood sahw (an extra two prostrations). (Al-Majmoo' li'l-Nawawi, 4/356). There is no harm done by any speaking or asking that were necessary for the sake of his prayer.

Being unable to stand for the rest of a prayer

If a person who is praying is suddenly unable to stand up for the rest of his prayer, or a person who had to pray sitting down is suddenly able to stand, what should he do?

Ibn Qudaamah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: "As soon as a sick person who is praying becomes able to do what he could not do at the beginning of his prayer, whether it be standing, sitting, bowing, prostrating or any other movement, then he should continue and build on what he has already completed. Similarly, if a person begins the prayer capable of performing all actions, then suddenly becomes unable to do certain things, he should carry on as best he can, and build on what he has already completed as if nothing has changed." (al-Mughni ma'a al-Sharh al-Kabeer, 1/782; see also al-Majmoo' li'l-Nawawi, 4/318)

The evidence for this is the hadeeth of 'Imraan ibn Husayn (may Allaah be pleased with him): "I had haemorrhoids ("piles"), so I asked the Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) about salaah. He said: 'Pray standing up, but if you cannot, then sitting down, and if you cannot, then on your side.'" (Reported by al-Bukhaari, Fath, 2/587).

A knock on the door when one is praying, or a mother seeing her child do something dangerous

If someone knocks on the door whilst one is praying, or a mother who is praying sees her child playing with an electrical outlet or doing something similarly dangerous, what should be done?

If a person who is praying needs to do something relatively minor, such as opening a door, there is nothing wrong with doing so, so long as he continues to face the qiblah.

The evidence for this is the hadeeth narrated by Abu Dawood from 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) who said: "The Messenger of Allaah SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to pray with the door closed. I came and asked him to open it, so he came and opened it for me, then went back to his prayer." The narrator mentioned that the door was in the direction of the qiblah. (Sunan Abi Dawood, no. 922; Saheeh Sunan Abi Dawood, 815).

The same applies if a mother is praying and needs to move her child away from something dangerous or harmful, and so on. A simple movement to the right or left, or forwards or backwards, will not affect her prayer. Similarly, if one's ridaa' (upper garment) falls off, the one who is praying can pick it up, and if the izaar (lower garment) becomes loose, he can tighten it. In certain cases, sharee'ah allows excessive movements during prayer, even if this means moving away from facing the qiblah, as is reported in the hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him): "The Messenger of Allaah SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'Kill the two black things while in prayer: the snake and the scorpion.'" (Sunan Abi Dawood, no. 92; Saheeh Sunan Abi Dawood, 814).

Responding to salaam when praying

If salaam (Islamic greeting) is given to a person whilst he is praying, he can reply with a gesture, as was reported from Suhayb (may Allaah be pleased with him), who said: "I passed by the Messenger of Allaah SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) as he was praying. I greeted him with salaam, and he responded with a gesture." (Sunan Abi Dawood, 925; Saheeh Sunan Abi Dawood, 818).

The gesture is described in a number of ahaadeeth, such as that narrated by Ibn 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him) who said: "The Messenger of Allaah SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) went out to Qubaa' to pray there. The Ansaar came to him and greeted him with salaam whilst he was praying. I asked Bilaal, 'How did you see the Messenger of Allaah SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) reply to them when they said salaam to him and he was praying?' He said: 'Like this,' and flattened his hand." Ja'far ibn 'Awn (one of the narrators) flattened his hand with the palm facing downwards and the back of his hand facing upwards. (Sunan Abi Dawood, 927; Saheeh Sunan Abi Dawood, 820).

Joining a prayer in progress

If a man enters the masjid while the imaam is praying, should he join the imaam immediately in whatever position he is in and start praying, or should he wait to see whether the imaam is going to sit or stand?

The correct answer is that which is indicated by the evidence (daleel): he should join the imaam no matter what part of the prayer he has reached – prostrating, standing, bowing or sitting. The evidence is the hadeeth of Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him): "The Messenger of Allaah SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'If you come to the prayer and we are prostrating, then prostrate, but don't count it, and whoever catches a rak'ah has caught the prayer.'" (Sunan Abi Dawood, 893; Saheeh Sunan Abu Dawood, 792). Mu'aadh said: "The Messenger of

Allaah SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘If one of you comes to prayer and the imaam is in a certain position, then do as the imaam is doing.’” (Sunan al-Tirmidhi, 591; see also Saheeh Sunan al-Tirmidhi, 484). Also, there is the general meaning of the hadeeth: “Whatever you catch up with, pray.”

Not hastening unduly to join a prayer in progress

If the prayer starts and a person is still on his way to the mosque, he should not hasten unduly; he should walk with calmness and dignity, as indicated in the hadeeth of Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him): “The Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘If the prayer starts, do not approach it running; approach it walking with calmness and dignity. Whatever you catch up with, pray, and whatever you miss, complete it [afterwards].’” (Reported by al-Bukhaari, Fath, 2/390).

Breaking wind during a congregational prayer

If a man breaks wind during a congregational prayer, what should he do in this embarrassing situation?

He should put his hand over his nose, and go out. The evidence for this was reported by ‘Aa’ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her), who said: “The Messenger of Allaah SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘If one of you passes wind whilst he is praying, he should hold his nose and leave.’” (Sunan Abi Dawood, 1114; see also Saheeh Sunan Abi Dawood, 985). Al-Teebi said: “The command to hold one’s nose is to make it appear as though one is bleeding. This is not lying; it is a form of action that is allowed so that Shaytaan will not convince a person in this situation not to leave because he feels too shy of others.” (Mirqaat al-Mafaateeh Sharh Mishkaat al-Masaabeeh, 3/18).

This is an example of the kind of ambiguity that is allowed and approved of, in order to avoid embarrassment, as whoever sees him leaving in this manner will assume that he is suffering a nosebleed. Another benefit of this Prophetic advice is that it puts a stop to the insinuating whispers of the Shaytaan, which may otherwise cause him to stay in the row or continue praying with the congregation when he has passed wind, and this does not please Allaah. How can he stay when the Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) has commanded him to leave?

In this case he is permitted either to pass through the rows, or to walk to the edge of the mosque, in order to leave, so that he can go and make wudoo', then come back and rejoin the prayer.

When one has already prayed and comes to another mosque to find the people there praying

If a person has already prayed in one mosque, then he comes to another mosque for a lesson or for some other reason, and finds the people there praying, then he should join them and his prayer would be considered a naafil (supererogatory or "extra") prayer. He should do so even if it is during the prohibited times of prayer because there is a reason behind it. The evidence for this comes from the hadeeth of Yazeed ibn al-Aswad (may Allah be pleased with him): "I performed Hajj with the Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and prayed Fajr with him in Masjid Al-Khayf. When he completed his prayer and turned around, he found two people at the back who did not pray with him. He said, 'I have to talk to them.' So he came to them, and they were trembling. He asked them: 'What prevented you two from praying with us?' They said: 'O Messenger of Allah! We had already prayed in our places.' He said: 'Do not do that. If you have already prayed at your places and then came to a congregational mosque, pray with them too and it will become a supererogatory prayer for you.'" (Sunan Al-Tirmidhi, no. 219; Saheeh al-Jaami', 667)

In another hadeeth it is narrated that the two came after the Fajr prayer which is a time when prayer is prohibited. Imaam Maalik has reported in al-Muwatta' in the chapter on "What has been narrated about repeating the prayer with the imaam after a person has prayed individually":

> "Mihjan (radiAllahu 'anhu), said that he was in the company of the Messenger of Allaah SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), when the call to prayer was given. The Messenger of Allaah SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) got up and prayed in congregation, then came back, while Mihjan stayed in his place and did not pray with them. So the Messenger of Allaah SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to him: 'What prevented you from praying with the people? Are you not a Muslim?' He said: 'Indeed I am, O Prophet of Allah! But I had already prayed at home.' The Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to him: 'When you come (to the mosque) then pray with the people even if you have already prayed.'" (al-Muwatta', 1/130; Silsilah al-Saheehah, no. 1337)

Still praying sunnah when the iqaamah is given

If a person has entered the mosque and is praying sunnah, then the iqaamah is called, the best opinion in this case is that if he is in his second rak'ah, he should finish it quickly, and if he is in the first rak'ah, he should just break his prayer and enter the congregation with the imaam. (Fataawa Ibn 'Uthaymeen, 1/345).

The basis for this is the report which Imaam Muslim narrated in his Saheeh: "The Messenger of Allaah SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'If iqaamah is called for the prayer then there is no prayer except the obligatory one.'" (Saheeh Muslim, 1/493)

So, if a person has performed the rukoo' of the second rak'ah when the iqaamah is called, then he should complete his prayer. If the iqaamah is called before he does

the rukoo’ of the second rak’ah, then he should discontinue because what is left of sujood and tashahhud is not needed any more. Moreover, he should break without salaam, and it is enough to have the intention in the heart, contrary to common misconception.

Being informed of the correct direction of the qiblah whilst praying

If there is a congregation praying, and during their prayer they are informed that the qiblah is in a direction other than that which they were facing, they should all turn towards the correct direction. The same is also true for someone praying individually. Whatever part of their prayer has been performed (before changing direction) will be correct.

The evidence for this is a narration reported by Imaam Muslim from Anas (may Allah be pleased with him): “While the Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was praying towards Bayt-al-Maqdis (Jerusalem), the aayah was revealed to him (interpretation of the meaning): ‘Verily! We have seen the turning of your face towards the heaven. Surely, We shall turn you to a qiblah that shall please you, so turn your face in the direction of al-Masjid al-Haram.’ [Al-Baqarah 2:144]. A man from Bani Salamah was passing by and found them (i.e., the people of Bani Salamah) in the state of rukoo‘ in the second rak‘ah of the Fajr prayer. He called out to them: ‘The qiblah has been changed,’ so they changed direction while they were still in rukoo’.” (Saheeh Muslim, No. 527)

If some of the people were informed and the others were not, then the one to whom it was made clear should turn to the direction which he believes to be the correct direction of qiblah. Now if all of these people were originally praying together in the same direction, then some of them turned towards the right and some towards the left, it is still valid for one of them to lead the others in prayer. But the scholars have a difference of opinion about some people following others in cases of complete

disagreement about the direction of the qiblah. If there is someone among them who is completely ignorant about the direction, he should follow the one who is more aware amongst them of the direction of the qiblah. (Al-Mughni ma'a al-Sharh al-Kabeer, 1/473). If someone does not know the direction of the qiblah, he must ask someone if he can, or else he should make ijtihaad (make a judgment to the best of his ability based on the information available) if he is able to, otherwise he must follow someone who is reliable. If he cannot find such a person, then he should fear Allah, do his best and pray, and his prayer is valid. This sometimes happens to people who travel to the lands of the disbelievers and find no Muslim or anybody else who could tell them the correct direction of the qiblah, and have no means of finding out. But if a person is capable of finding out the direction of the qiblah, but was neglectful and prayed without making all possible efforts, he should repeat his prayer because he was careless. (Al-Mughni ma'a al-Sharh al-Kabeer, 1/490).

Falling behind when praying in congregation

If a person is praying in a congregation and the loudspeaker stops working or he becomes drowsy and he lags behind the imaam by one or more obligatory acts (arkaan) of prayer (i.e., the imaam performed it and he did not because of not hearing the imaam's voice), then when he wakes up again or the sound of the speaker comes back, he should complete the obligatory acts that he has missed, then continue following the imaam.

This problem may arise in many cases. For example: the imaam recites a verse that contains the word of prostration (sajdah) and some of the people misunderstand it to be a verse of prostration while in reality it is not, so when the imaam says takbeer for rukoo' at the end of the verse and performs rukoo', some of the followers (especially those towards the rear of the congregation) take it to be the takbeer for the prostration of recital, so they prostrate. When the imaam stands up from the rukoo'

saying “sami‘a Allahu li man hamidah”, they stand up from their prostration, thus having missed the act of rukoo‘ and standing up from it. So it is incumbent on them to complete what they missed and then catch up with the imaam. This is because they did not do it intentionally. However, in the case of one who intentionally lags behind the imaam (e.g., someone who prolongs his prostration to make a long supplication such that he misses the obligatory act which comes after the prostration), the majority of scholars say that the prayer of someone who misses two consecutive obligatory acts of prayer without a valid excuse, is void and he is a sinner. (Kashshaaf al-Qinaa’, 1/467; al-Mawsoo’ah al-Fiqhiyyah, 6/29). However, the principle is that the imaam must be followed, as the Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “The imaam is there to be followed, so do not differ from him. When he goes into rukoo‘, make rukoo‘. When he says “Sami’a Allahu li man hamidah” (Allah hears the one who praises Him), say “Rabbanaa laka’l-hamd” (O our Lord! To You belongs the Praise). When he goes into sajdah, make sajdah. If he prays sitting, then all should pray sitting.” (Saheeh al-Bukhaari, no. 689)

When the imaam nullifies his wudoo’

If the Imaam nullifies his wudoo’ whilst he is praying, or remembers during the prayer that he did not perform ablution, then he should come out from prayer and appoint someone to finish leading the prayer, as was narrated from ‘Umar, ‘Ali, ‘Alqamah and ‘Ataa’. If he does not appoint anyone, and the people pray individually, this is also acceptable, and this is the opinion taken by Imaam Al-Shaafi‘i. If he brings someone forward to lead them, that is also permitted.

The evidence for this is what has been narrated regarding ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) when he was stabbed: he took the hand of ‘Abd al-Rahmaan bin ‘Awf and made him step forward, and he led the prayer to completion. (Reported by al-Bukhaari, Fath, 7/60). The reason for this deduction is that ‘Umar did this in the

presence of a number of Companions and others and no one opposed this act, so it became a consensus (ijmaa‘). (Ahkaam al-Imaamah, al-Muneef, p. 234).

If the imaam remembers that he is not in a state of purity, he should indicate to the people to remain as they are and go and purify himself, then come back, say “Allaahu akbar” and lead them in prayer. This is valid. The evidence for this is the report narrated by Abu Dawood from Abu Bakrah: “The Messenger of Allaah SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) started to lead the fajr prayer, then he indicated to the people that they should stay in their places. Then he came back and water was dripping from his head.” (Sunan Abi Dawood, no. 233; Saheeh Sunan Abi Dawood, 1/45.

Abu Dawood included a chapter entitled Fi’l-Junub yusalli bi’l-qawmi wa huwa naasin (One who inadvertently leads the people in prayer when in a state of janaabah)).

Commenting on this hadeeth, Imaam Al-Khattaabi said: “In this hadeeth there is evidence that if one is leading the people in prayer while in a state of janaabah and the people do not know of it, then their prayer is unaffected and there is no need for them to repeat it. But the Imaam has to repeat his prayer.” (Sunan Abi Dawood wa ma’ahu Ma’aalim al-Sunan by al-Khattaabi, edited by al-Da’aas, 1/159.)

When the imaam’s ‘awrah becomes uncovered

If someone is praying in congregation behind the imaam and sees his ‘awrah (those parts of the body that must be covered) uncovered due to an opening in his clothes or due to his clothes being thin and transparent, then if it is possible he should go ahead and cover it with something, otherwise he should come out of his prayer and inform the imaam by saying “cover your ‘awrah” (in Arabic “ghatti’l-‘awrah”), or “protect what has been uncovered”. He should not stay quiet and continue to pray because it

is known that the imaam's prayer (in this condition) is incorrect and following him is incorrect as well. (From the oral fataawa of Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz).

Realizing that one's wudoo' is invalid because of wiping over socks when doing so is no longer acceptable

If one is praying (either as an imaam or as a member of a congregation or individually) and recalls that he had wiped over his socks (khuff) during wudoo' at the time when the period during which this is acceptable had expired, he should terminate his prayer because his ablution is incorrect. This is what has been quoted from Imaams Ahmad and al-Shaafi'i. (al-Mughni, 2/505)

When the imaam forgets the ending of an aayah

If the Imaam recites a part of the Qur'an in the prayer and forgets the ending of the verse, and none of the members of the congregation remind him of it, he can choose either to say the takbeer and discontinue the recitation, or to recite one verse or more from another soorah. But this is allowed only if the forgotten part is not from al-Faatihah. As far as al-Faatihah is concerned, it must be recited in its entirety, as reciting it is an obligatory act of prayer. (Ibn Baaz: Fataawa Islaamiyyah, 396).

Intending to pray for rain, then it rains before the people start the prayer

If the people go out to gather for salaat al-istisqaa' (prayer for rain), or were intending to do so, and then it rained, then either of the following apply:

If they had got ready to go out and it rained before they left, then they should thank Allah (subhanahu wa ta'ala) for His blessings and not go out.

If they had already come out, and it rained before they could pray, they should offer a prayer in gratitude to Allah, may He be exalted. (al-Mughni, 2/296)

Feeling sleepy when listening to Friday sermon

If a person becomes sleepy or dozes while listening to the Friday sermon, it is recommended for him to change places with the person next to him. In doing this he should be careful not to speak; rather, he should communicate by gestures. The evidence for this is the hadeeth narrated by Samurah who said: "The Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'If one of you dozes during the Friday sermon, he should change places with the person sitting next to him.'" (Al-Bayhaqi, 3/238; Saheeh al-Jaami' no. 812)

Another hadeeth was narrated by Ibn 'Umar who said: "The Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'If one of you dozes in the mosque on Friday, he should move to another place to sit.'" (Abu Dawood, no. 1119; Saheeh al-Jaami' no. 809)

RULINGS ABOUT FORGETFULNESS DURING PRAYER (AL-SAHW)

Doubt about number of rak'ahs prayed

If a person is in doubt as to whether he prayed, for example, three or four rak'ahs, he should act according to what is most likely. However, if he cannot be sure which is more likely, he should assume what he can be certain of, which is the lesser amount, and make the prostrations of forgetfulness (sujood ul-sahw).

The evidence is the hadeeth narrated by Abu Sa'eed Al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: "The Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'If one of you has doubts during his prayer and he does not recall how many

rak‘ahs he has prayed, whether three or four, then should forget about his doubt and complete his prayer on the basis of that of which he is certain, and then make two sujood before the salaam. If it turns out that he had prayed five rak‘ah, the two sujood would make it even, and if he ended up completing his four rak‘ahs , they would be in defiance of the Shaytaan.’” (Saheeh Muslim, no. 571)

Imaam remembers that he forgot to recite al-Faatihah during a silent rak’ah

If the imaam remembers in the final tashahhud (sitting of the prayer) that he had recitedat-tahiyyaat (the greetings mentioned during the sitting) in the beginning of a silent rak‘ah instead of al-Faatihah, he should stand up and offer another, correct, rak‘ah, to make up for the one he performed incorrectly where he did not recite al-Faatihah. This is because the Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “There is no prayer for the one who did not recite (in it) al-Faatihah (the opening chapter of the Qur’an).” (Saheeh al-Bukhaari, no. 723)

It is also required for the members of the congregation behind him to follow him, even though it would be the fifth rak‘ah for them. If they do not understand and do not stand up, but say “subhaan Allah” as if to indicate to the imaam that he is in error, the imaam should gesture with hand movements to the right and left to inform them that he did it purposefully and to indicate to them that they should stand up and that he knows what he is doing.

However, if something like this happens to one of the people praying behind the imaam, his prayer will be correct as long as he followed the imaam.

The evidence for this is the hadeeth of Abu Bakrah which describes when he joined the prayer in the position of rukoo‘ and did not recite al-Faatihah. The Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to him: “May Allah increase your endeavor. You do not need to repeat.” (Saheeh al-Bukhaari, no. 750).

A member of a congregation forgetting to recite al-Faatihah, or joining the prayer at the moment of rukoo'

If the person following the imaam forgets to recite al-Faatihah, or is ignorant of its obligatory nature, or joins the prayer when the imaam is in the state of rukoo', then his rak'ah will be considered as complete and his prayer correct. He does not need to repeat the rak'ah, as he is excused for his ignorance or forgetfulness, or for not joining the prayer in time for the qiyaam (the part of the rak'ah when one is standing upright). This is the opinion of the majority of scholars. (Ibn Baaz: Fataawa Islamiyyah, 1/263).

This is one of the things which the imaam bears on behalf of those whom he leads in prayer.

Raising one's head from rukoo' then realizing that one forgot to say the tasbeeh

If a person raises his head from rukoo' then remembers that he did not say the tasbeeh of rukoo', he should not return to the rukoo' because the requirement for supplication of rukoo' is no longer applicable by virtue of his having raised his head. If he returns to the rukoo' intentionally, this action would render his prayer invalid since he has added an extra rukn (obligatory act of the prayer) which is this second, superfluous, rukoo'. However, if it was due to ignorance or forgetfulness, his prayer will not be nullified, but in this case he must make the prostration of forgetfulness if he was praying individually or leading a congregation. This is because saying tasbeeh ("subhaana Rabbi al-'Azeem, How Perfect is my Lord, the Supreme") is waajib (obligatory), and if one forgets it, it can be compensated for by making the prostration of forgetfulness. If he was praying behind an imaam and forgets the tasbeeh, then he is no longer considered to have omitted an obligatory act. (al-Mughni ma'a al-Sharh al-Kabeer, 1/679).

Forgetting the first tashahhud

If a person forgets the first tashahhud, stands up for the third rak‘ah and starts the recitation of al-Faatihah, then according to the majority of scholars, he should not return to the sitting position. If he does so knowing that his return is unapproved of, his prayer will be nullified because he has already started another obligatory act. The obligatory act that he forgot (i.e., tashahhud) can be made up for by making the prostrations of forgetfulness. The evidence is the hadeeth narrated by al-Mugheerah ibn Shu‘bah: “The Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘If the imaam begins to stand up after the second rak‘ah, then remembers, before he has stood fully upright, that he should sit, then he should sit down, but if he has already stood fully upright, he should not sit, but should make two prostrations of forgetfulness. (Abu Dawood, no. 1036; Silsilah al-Saheehah, 321)

In short, if someone stands up for the third rak‘ah, forgetting the tashahhud, one of the three following scenarios applies:

If he remembers it before standing up straight: then he should return to tashahhud.

If he remembers after standing up straight, and before starting the recitation of al-Faatihah: then it is better for him not to sit, but if he sits his prayer will be valid.

If he remembers it after starting the recitation of al-Faatihah: then he is not allowed to return to tashahhud. (al-Mughni ma’a al-Sharh al-Kabeer, 1/677)

These three cases have been deduced from the hadeeth quoted above.

Imaam says the salaam then makes prostrations of forgetfulness, but a latecomer stands up to complete his prayer

If the imaam says the salaam and a person who joined the prayer late stands up to complete what he missed, then suddenly he sees the imaam making prostrations of forgetfulness after the salaam, the latecomer should sit back down and make prostrations with the imaam, if he has not yet stood fully upright. Otherwise he should not sit back down; he should complete his prayer, then he should make the missed prostrations of forgetfulness. The evidence for this is the same as presented in the discussion on forgetting to sit for tashahhud between the second and third rak'ahs. (al-Mughni ma'a al-Sharh al-Kabeer, 1/697).

Imaam makes a mistake but doesn't understand what the congregation is referring to when they say "subhaan Allaah" to draw his attention to it

If the imaam makes a mistake and misses an obligatory part of the prayer, and the congregation remind him of the mistake (by saying "subhaan Allah"), but he does not understand what they mean or does not know when or where he made the mistake, and continues to move on to other obligatory acts which do not include the missed act, then there a number of opinions as to how they should make him understand. The best of these opinions is that they should remind him of the act by the particular supplication for that act, e.g., saying "subhaana Rabbi al-'Azeem" if it was the rukoo' or "subhaana Rabbi al-A'la" if it was the prostration, or Rabbighfir li if it was the sitting between the two prostrations, etc. (al-Mughni ma'a al-Sharh al-Kabeer, 1/707)

MISCELLANEOUS RULINGS

Forgetting to wear ihraam for Hajj or 'Umrah

If someone is travelling in an airplane and forgets to wear the garments of ihraam, and the plane takes off, he should try to make it out of two pieces of cloth, whatever

color they may be, or with any type of sheets or towels he can get hold of. If he cannot find anything appropriate, he should remove whatever sewn clothes and head covering (if he is wearing one) he can, and enter the state of ihraam in whatever he is wearing when he passes by the miqaat in the air. He should not cross the miqaat without being in a state of ihraam. Once he reaches a place where he can change his clothes and wear two sheets of cloth (proper ihraam garments), he should do so; in addition, he must pay a penalty (fidya) of either sacrificing a sheep or fasting for three days or feeding six needy people. He has the choice of doing any one of these three and his ihraam is correct.

Interruption of tawaaf or sa'ee

If a person is performing tawaaf (circumambulation around the Ka'bah) or sa'ee (between Safa and Marwah), and he finds himself in need (e.g., he is thirsty and needs to drink something, or loses one of his family members and stops to look for him, or becomes tired and needs to take some rest), then if the break is short and is recognized as such ('urfan), he may then continue from where he left off. In the case where the prayer is called and he interrupts his tawaaf to pray, the scholars have disagreed on this issue. The most cautious opinion is that when he continues his tawaaf, he should not count the last round which he left incomplete when he interrupted his tawaaf in order to pray. (Ibn Baaz: Fataawa al-Hajj wa'l-'Umrah, p. 80; al-Majmoo' li'l-Nawawi, 8/49).

The issue of taking a rest in tawaaf and sa'ee, however, is based on the condition that tawaf and sa'ee should be uninterrupted. In sa'ee, continuity is not a requirement according to the best opinion. (al-Mughni ma'a al-Sharh al-Kabeer, 3/414) So, if a person is performing sa'ee, and he breaks after some of the rounds, and then comes back to complete them, this would be considered permissable. However, regarding continuity of tawaaf, the scholars have two opinions:

That continuity is waajib (mandatory), and that a long interruption without due justification nullifies the tawaaf.

That continuity is a sunnah, and the tawaaf is not nullified even though the break was long. (This is the opinion favoured by al-Nawawi in al-Majmoo', 8/47)

However, it is better to act according to the first opinion, to be on the safe side.

Burial of one who dies at sea

If a person dies on a ship while travelling at sea, according to Imaam Ahmad, the people should wait if they hope to reach some place where they can bury him (such as an island or beach) in a day or two, and if they are confident that the body will not decay. However, if this is not possible, they should wash the body, shroud and embalm it, then pray the funeral prayer, and finally, tie something heavy to it and drop it in the water. (al-Mughni ma'a al-Sharh al-Kabeer, 2/381)

Changing money (same currency)

Suppose a person has, for example, a currency note with a face value of 50, and he wants to change it into five 10's, and asks another person to provide the change for him, but this person has only three 10's. Is it permitted for the first person (i.e. the one who wants the change) to give him the 50 and take the three 10's, leaving the remaining 20 as a loan to be collected by him later?

Since such a practice is widespread nowadays, most people would be taken aback if they are informed that this is riba (usury). The reason (for such a practice being usury) is that the amount each one of the two took is different, whereas the condition in selling and changing currency notes is that if they belong to the same type of

currency (e.g., dollars in exchange for dollars, or dinars in exchange for dinars, etc.) then they must be the same in monetary value and exchanged “cash down” (hand in hand, not deferred). This is because the Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Do not sell gold for gold unless the two are equivalent, and do not sell a lesser amount for a greater amount or vice versa. Do not sell silver for silver unless the two are equivalent, and do not sell a lesser amount for a greater amount or vice versa. Do not sell gold and silver that is not present at the moment of exchange (i.e. a deferred amount) for gold or silver that is present.” (Saheeh al-Bukhaari, No. 2068)

This hadeeth prohibits both riba al-fadl (usury of surplus) and riba an-nasee’ah (usury of credit or delayed payment).

So the way for people to avoid this, as they are always in need of exchanging currency notes, is as follows: the one who has a currency note of 50 should give it to the other as collateral and take the 30 from him as a loan. Later he should repay the loan and take his 50 back. (N.B. Although the net result may appear the same, there is a difference in the way the transaction takes place.) (From the oral fataawa of Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azeez ibn Baaz).

Being asked to do something at work that is against Islamic teachings

What should one do if one is asked to do something at work that he feels is contrary to the teachings of Islam?

If a person is ordered to do a certain assignment at his work, he should think about it — if the act does not involve any disobedience to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, he should go ahead and do it. Otherwise, if it does involve some disobedience to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, he should not obey the command, or else he will be a party to sin and wrong-doing. The

Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “A human must not be obeyed if that involves disobedience to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted. Indeed, obedience only applies in the case of righteous deeds.” (Saheeh al-Bukhaari with Fath al-Baari, 13/121; Ahmad, 1/91; this version was narrated in al-Silsilah al-Saheehah, No. 181)

Allah said in the Qur’an (about the people who went astray) (interpretation of the meaning): “They will say: ‘Our Lord! Verily, we obeyed our chiefs and our great ones, and they misled us from the (Right) Way.’” [al-Ahzaab 33:67]

GENERAL BEHAVIOR AND SUNNAH OF THE PROPHET SAWS (PEACE AND BLESSINGS OF ALLAAH BE UPON HIM)

The proper way to thank Allaah

If a Muslim receives a bounty or is rescued from some trial, it is recommended for him to perform the prostration of thankfulness. Abu Bakrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) reports that: “When the Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) received something which pleased him or glad tidings, he would make prostration in thanks to Allah.” (Abu Dawood, no. 2774;. It is saheeh, and was also reported in Mishkaat al-Masaabeeh, no. 1494)

Ritual purity (tahaarah) and facing the qiblah is not a requirement to make the prostration of thankfulness, however, if one makes wudoo’ and faces the qiblah, that is preferred. (Majmoo‘ Fataawa by Ibn ‘Uthaymeen, 4/216.)

Accepting money or property received without asking for it

If something (e.g., money, property, etc.) which is halaal (Islamically permissible) comes to you, whether through another person or other entity, without you asking,

yearning or begging for it, and without you having degraded yourself, then he should accept it. ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that: “The Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘If something (i.e., money, property, etc.) comes to you for which you did not yearn or ask for, then accept it. Otherwise do not bother about it.’” (Saheeh al-Bukhaari, no. 1404)

Asking a Muslim host about food or drink he serves

If a Muslim is served food in his Muslim brother’s house, and he is worried about whether the meat is halaal or haraam, he may eat it without questioning because, in Islam, the principle is that a Muslim is trustworthy. The evidence for this is the saying of the Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): “If one of you enters the house of his Muslim brother and he offers him food, let him eat it and not ask anything about it, and if he offers him something to drink, let him drink it and not ask anything about it.” (Ahmad, 2/399; al-Silsilah al-Saheehah, no. 627)

This is also because such interrogation may insult his host and make him feel that he is being doubted.

Walking with only one shoe on if the other one is damaged

If someone walking with shoes on, and breaks or tears one of them, he should not walk with only one shoe, while his other foot is bare. He should either repair the broken shoe and wear both, or take off both and walk barefoot. Walking barefoot at times is sunnah. The evidence for this is the narration of Abu Hurayrah that: “The Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘One should not walk with only one shoe. One should either wear both or take both of them off.’” (Saheeh al-Bukhaari, no. 5518)

The scholars have said a number of things about the reason for doing so. The most authentic of these is what has been described by Ibn al-‘Arabi and others that “It is the way of walking of the Shaytaan”. (Fath al-Baari, 10/310) The evidence for this is the report of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him): “The Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘Indeed the Shaytaan walks in one shoe.’” (al-Silsilah al-Saheehah, no. 348)

Good dreams

If a Muslim sees a good dream, it is recommended for him to do the following: He should praise and thank Allah, may He be glorified. He may interpret it himself or discuss it with a knowledgeable person who may interpret it for him.

He should not tell anyone about it except someone who may give him good advice, or someone who is wise, or someone he loves. He should not inform someone who may become jealous of him.

The evidence for this is the report of Abu Sa’eed al-Khudri (may Allaah be pleased with him): “The Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘If anyone of you sees a dream that he likes, then it is from Allah, and he should thank Allah for it and tell it to others.’” (Saheeh al-Bukhaari, no. 6584)

And it was also reported from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) that: “The Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘Do not narrate your good dreams to anyone except a knowledgeable person or someone who may give you good advice.’” (Jaami‘ al-Tirmidhi, no. 2280; al-Silsilah al-Saheehah, no. 1119)

This is because such persons may interpret it in the most appropriate way, unlike one who is jealous or ignorant.

Bad dreams

If a Muslim sees a bad dream (nightmare), he should do the following:

He should spit (dryly) to his left three times

He should seek refuge in Allah from Shaytaan three times

He should seek refuge in Allah from the evil of the dream

He should stand up and pray

He should change the side on which he was sleeping if he wants to continue to sleep, even if that means turning onto his left side

He should not inform anyone

He should neither interpret it himself nor ask anyone else to interpret it.

The evidence for this is the narration of Jaabir (may Allaah be pleased with him) that: "The Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'If any one of you sees a dream that he dislikes, he should spit to his left three times, seek refuge in Allah from the Shaytaan, and turn over on to his other side.'" (Saheeh Muslim, no. 2262)

According to another report, the wording is: "He should seek refuge in Allah from its evil, so that it does not harm him."

The narrator of this hadeeth said: "I used to see dreams that weighed heavier on me than a mountain, but as soon as I heard this hadeeth, so I never worried about it again." (Saheeh Muslim, no. 2261)

Jaabir (may Allaah be pleased with him) reported that a Bedouin came to the Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said: "O Prophet of Allah, I saw a dream that my head was chopped off and rolled away, and I ran after it." The Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to him: "Do not tell people the Shaytaan is playing with you in your dreams." (Saheeh Muslim, no. 2268)

According to another report, the wording is: “If anyone sees something he dislikes, he should get up and pray.” (Jaami‘ al-Tirmidhi, no. 2280; Saheeh al-Jaami‘, no. 3533)

Being affected by seeing a woman

If a Muslim sees a non-mahram woman, and this has an effect on him, then if he has a wife he should go home and have intercourse with her so that he may rid himself of whatever affected him. The evidence for this is the narration of Jaabir (may Allaah be pleased with him): “The Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘If any one of you is attracted to and likes a woman, he should go back to his wife and have intercourse with her, because this will rid him of whatever affected him.’” (Saheeh Muslim, no. 1403)

Sitting between the sun and the shade is not allowed

If the place where one is sitting falls between the sun and the shade, he should change his place, because the Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “If one of you is (sitting) in shade that diminishes in size, resulting in part of his body remaining in the sun and the rest under shade, he should get up and move.” (Abu Dawood, no. 4821; Saheeh al-Jaami‘, no. 748)

The reason for this is that this is the position favoured by the Shaytaan. The evidence is the Prophet’s prohibition of sitting partially in the sun and partially in shade. He SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “This is the place where the Shaytaan sits.” (Ahmad, 3/413; Saheeh al-Jaami‘, No. 6823)

When illness strikes one's wife

If an illness strikes someone's wife, it is recommended for him to do what the Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did: "When an illness struck his one of his wives, he ordered for soup to be prepared. Then he ordered her to drink from it. He used to say: 'This strengthens the heart of the one who is distressed, and cleans the heart of the sick person just as one of you cleans her face with water.'" (Jaami' al-Tirmidhi, no. 2039; Saheeh al-Jaami', no. 4646)

If one's children or family members lie

If one of the children or family members of a person lies, he should treat this issue as did the Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): "If he SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came to know that one of his family members had lied, he would keep away from him until he repented." (al-Silsilah al-Saheehah, no. 2052; Saheeh al-Jaami', no. 4675)

When telling the truth is not the best option

If a Muslim faces a difficult situation where he needs to say what is against the truth in order to protect himself or someone who is innocent, or to save himself from serious trouble, is there a way for him to escape the situation without lying or falling into sin?

Yes, there is a legal way and a permissible escape that one can make use of if necessary. It is equivocation or indirectness in speech. Imaam al-Bukhaari (may Allaah have mercy on him) entitled a chapter of his Saheeh: "Indirect speech is a safe way to avoid a lie". (Saheeh al-Bukhaari, Kitaab al-Adab (Book of Manners), chapter 116).

Equivocation means saying something which has a closer meaning that the hearer will understand, but it also has a remote meaning which what is actually meant and is linguistically correct. The condition for this is that whatever is said should not present a truth as falsity and vice versa. The following are examples of such statements used by the salaf and early imaams, and collected by Imaam Ibn al-Qayyim in his book Ighaathat al-Lahfaan: It was reported about Hammaad (may Allaah have mercy on him), if someone came that he did not want to sit with, he would say as if in pain: "My tooth, my tooth!" Then the boring person whom he did not like would leave him alone.

Imaam Sufyaan Al-Thawri was brought to the khaleefah al-Mahdi, who liked him, but when he wanted to leave, the khaleefah told him he had to stay. Al-Thawri swore that he would come back. He then went out, leaving his shoes at the door. After some time he came back, took his shoes and went away. The khaleefah asked about him, and was told that he had sworn to come back, so he had come back and taken his shoes.

Imaam Ahmad was in his house, and some of his students, including al-Mirwadhi, were with him. Someone came along, asking for al-Mirwadhi from outside the house, but Imaam Ahmad did not want him to go out, so he said: "Al-Mirwadhi is not here, what would he be doing here?" whilst putting his finger in the palm of his other hand, and the person outside could not see what he was doing.

Other examples of equivocation or indirectness in speech include the following:
If someone asks you whether you have seen so-and-so, and you are afraid that if you tell the questioner about him this would lead to harm, you can say "ma ra'aytuhu", meaning that you have not cut his lung, because this is a correct meaning in Arabic ["ma ra'aytuhu" usually means "I have not seen him," but can also mean "I have not cut his lung"]; or you could deny having seen him, referring in your heart to a specific time and place where you have not seen him. If someone asks you to swear an oath that you will never speak to so-and-so, you could say, "Wallaahi lan ukallumahu",

meaning that you will not wound him, because “kalam” can also mean “wound” in Arabic [as well as “speech”]. Similarly, if a person is forced to utter words of kufr and is told to deny Allaah, it is permissible for him to say “Kafartu bi’l-laahi”, meaning “I denounce the playboy” [which sounds the same as the phrase meaning “I deny Allaah.”]
(Ighaathat al-Lahfaan by Ibn al-Qayyim, 1/381 ff., 2/106-107. See also the section on equivocation (ma’aareed) in Al-Adaab al-Shar’iyyah by Ibn Muflih, 1/14).

However, one should be cautious that the use of such statements is restricted only to situations of great difficulty, otherwise:

- Excessive use of it may lead to lying.
- One may lose good friends, because they would always be in doubt as to what is meant.
- If the person to whom such a statement is given comes to know that the reality was different from what he was told, and he was not aware that the person was engaging in deliberate ambiguity or equivocation, he would consider that person to be a liar. This goes against the principle of protecting one’s honour by not giving people cause to doubt one’s integrity.
- The person who uses such a technique frequently may become proud of his ability to take advantage of people.

Finally, I ask Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, to give us a proper understanding of our religion, to teach us that which will benefit us, and benefit us from what He teaches us, to guide us, and to protect us from the evils of our own selves. Allah is the best Protector and He is the most Merciful of all.

~*~ May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad and his family and companions. ~*~